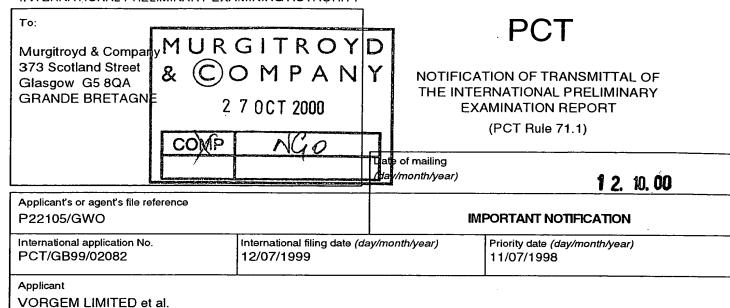
PATENT COOPERATION TREATY



MUR-8558US

From the INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY



- 1. The applicant is hereby notified that this International Preliminary Examining Authority transmits herewith the international preliminary examination report and its annexes, if any, established on the international application.
- 2. A copy of the report and its annexes, if any, is being transmitted to the International Bureau for communication to all the elected Offices.
- 3. Where required by any of the elected Offices, the International Bureau will prepare an English translation of the report (but not of any annexes) and will transmit such translation to those Offices.

4. REMINDER

The applicant must enter the national phase before each elected Office by performing certain acts (filing translations and paying national fees) within 30 months from the priority date (or later in some Offices) (Article 39(1)) (see also the reminder sent by the International Bureau with Form PCT/IB/301).

Where a translation of the international application must be furnished to an elected Office, that translation must contain a translation of any annexes to the international preliminary examination report. It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare and furnish such translation directly to each elected Office concerned.

For further details on the applicable time limits and requirements of the elected Offices, see Volume II of the PCT Applicant's Guide.

Name and mailing address of the IPEA/

Authorized officer

Conner, M

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PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference			FOR FURTHER ACT		cation of Transmittal of International
P22105	/GW	D	FOR FUNITIEN ACT	ON Prelimina	ry Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)
International application No. International filing			International filing date (day	/month/year)	Priority date (day/month/year)
PCT/GB99/02082 12/07/1999			12/07/1999		11/07/1998
Internation G01N21		ent Classification (IPC) or na	ational classification and IPC		
Applicant					
VORGE	M LIN	MITED et al.			
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		ational preliminary exam smitted to the applicant a		pared by this int	ernational Prēliminary Examining Authority
2. This	REPO	ORT consists of a total of	7 sheets, including this co	ver sheet.	
t	een a	amended and are the bas	d by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets sis for this report and/or she 07 of the Administrative Ins	ets containing re	on, claims and/or drawings which have ectifications made before this Authority he PCT).
Thes	e ann	exes consist of a total of	5 sheets.		
		·			
3. This	report	contains indications rela	ating to the following items:		
t	\boxtimes	Basis of the report			
11		Priority			
IIi		Non-establishment of o	pinion with regard to novelt	y, inventive step	and industrial applicability
IV		Lack of unity of invention			
V	Ø	Reasoned statement un citations and explanation	nder Article 35(2) with regar	rd to novelty, invent	entive step or industrial applicability;
VI		Certain documents cite	ed		•
VII		Certain defects in the in	nternational application		
VIII			n the international application	on	
Date of sub	missic	on of the demand	Da	te of completion of	this report
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	rax:	+49 89 2399 - 4465	I Tol	enhane No. ±49.80	2300 2102

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/GB99/02082

I.	Bas	sis	of	th	re	port
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	Thi	s report has been	drawn on the bas	is of (substitut		<u>.</u>	
•	the	ponse to an invitat report since they o	ion under Article	14 are referred	te sheets which If to in this repo	h have been furni. ort as "originally fi	shed to the receiving Office led" and are not annexed to
	De	scription, pages:					
-	1-1	3	as originally file	ed			
	Cla	ims, No.:					
ſ	1-3	1	as received on		31/07/2000	with letter of	28/07/2000
	Dra	wings, sheets:					
1	1/8-	-8/8	as originally file	d			
2. 1	The	amendments hav	e resulted in the	cancellation of	:		
[the description,	pages:				
0	X	the claims,	Nos.:	32			
[the drawings,	sheets:				
3. [This report has be considered to go	een established a beyond the disclo	s if (some of) to sure as filed (he amendmen Rule 70.2(c)):	ts had not been r	nade, since they have been

4. Additional observations, if necessary:



INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY **EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/GB99/02082

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to nov lty, inventiv step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)

Yes:

Claims 1-4, 6-11, 13-15, 20-30

No:

Claims 5, 12, 16-19, 31

Inventive step (IS)

Yes: Claims

No:

Claims 1-4, 6-11, 13-15, 20-30

Industrial applicability (IA)

Yes:

Claims 1-31

Claims No:

2. Citations and explanations

see separate sheet



INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY **EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/GB99/02082

Re Item V

Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Reference is made to the following documents:

D1: DE 27 36 262 A (NORTHERN TELECOM LTD) 16 March 1978 (1978-03-16)

D2: WO 98 07002 A (BECKMANN WILLIAM GEORGE ; VORGEM LIMITED (GB); HICKS SIMON ERIC (GB) 19 February 1998 (1998-02-19) cited in the application

D3: US-A-5 225 888 (SELWYN GARY S ET AL) 6 July 1993 (1993-07-06)

2. Method claims 1-4

Claim 1 2a.

Document D1 discloses a method of determining the progress of a plasma based etching process comprising the steps of continuously monitoring a predetermined frequency of radiation emitted from the plasma and of developing a graphical output corresponding to the level of emittance (cf. page 8, last para - page 9, first para). This graphical output is reproducible for subsequent etching processes and therefore enables an operator to obtain an indication of the progress of the process by visual comparison of the shape of the actual output with the predicted output. In particular the shape comprises several characteristic features which allow the determination not only of the end point but also of process progress (cf. page 9, last para - page 10, first para; figure 3).

From this disclosure the subject-matter of claim 1 differs only in that the comparison is performed electronically. The objective technical problem may therefore be regarded as how to automatize the method of process monitoring disclosed in D1. This problem is a standard problem in process automatization.

Once this particular problem has been formulated, it would be straightforward for the skilled person to replace the visual comparison of the shape of the measured signal with the shape of the predicted signal by an electronic comparison, thereby



INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY InterEXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET

arriving at the subject-matter of claim 1 without the exercise of inventive skill. An indication towards electronic comparison is even provided in D1 where the use of a comparator circuit in addition to the graphical output is disclosed (cf. page 8, last para - page 9, first para).

2b. Claims 2-4

The additional features of these claims are known from D1 (cf. page 8, last paragraph - page 9, first paragraph; page 8, paragraph 3; page 9, last paragraph - page 10, first paragraph).

3. Apparatus claims 5-31

3a. Claims 5 and 12

Claims 5 and 12 translate the features of claim 1 into apparatus features and are not considered to be inventive in view of D1, the argumentation being analogous to the one given for claim 1.

In addition document D2 discloses a process control system for controlling a thin layer etching process including means for continuously monitoring an optical frequency differentiated sample of radiation reflected from or transmitted by the layer and shape recognition means in the temporal domain for comparing the measured output against a predicted output or trend to provide an indication of progress of the process (cf. abstract; page 6, line 32 - page 8, line 22).

The formulation "optical frequency differentiated radiation from the process" used in claim 5 and "time evolving spectral output from a reaction" used in claim 12 are so broad that the subject-matter of claims 5 and 12 does not meet the requirement of novelty in view of D2.

3b. Claims 6-11 and 13-31

Dependent claims 6-11 and 13-31 do not contain any features which, in combination with the features of any claim to which they refer, meet the require-

EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET

ments of the PCT in respect of novelty and inventive step (Article 33(3) PCT), the reasons being as follows:

Claims 6-9:

The use of shape recognition means operating in the optical frequency domain is described in document D3 disclosing an interferometer for identifying trace constituents in a plasma during processing of semiconductors (cf. figure 4; column 7, line 67 - column 8, line 5; column 8, lines 11-12). In particular, D3 discloses the use of a Fabry-Perot etalon as well as the use of a tiltable narrow bandpass interference filter to scan a small range of wavelengths (cf. column 4, lines 34-39 and lines 48-51). The use of software as a shape recognition means operating in the optical frequency domain is described in D2 (cf. page 13, lines 16-19).

Claims 10, 11, 13-15, 24-27:

Radiation detecting means comprising a thin film filter or a monochromator and an interference device, in particular a Fabry-Perot interferometer, are disclosed in D3 (cf. column 7, line 67 - column 8, line 12; figure 4). The simultaneous examination of a plurality of spectral ranges is considered to be an obvious way of obtaining additional information about the process to be controlled.

Claims 16-23:

The use of a digital filter for determining the shape of the time evolving spectral output is known from D2 (cf. page 13, lines 20-29). The shape recognition methods of claims 17-23 are standard methods known to the skilled person. In particular the use of the Gradiometer, Fourier, and Liplike transforms is disclosed in D2 (cf. page 13, lines 29-32; page 14, lines 27-30).

Claims 28-30:

It is common general knowledge that gaseous compounds display characteristic fingerprints not only in emission but also in absorption. The observation of light absorption at a characteristic wavelength is therefore an obvious alternative for obtaining information about the gaseous species involved in the process. Lasers are standard light sources used in absorption spectroscopy.

Claim 31:

Plasma based processes are described both in D1 (cf. title) and in D2 (cf. title).

Re Item VII

Certain defects in the international application

- 1. Contrary to the requirements of Rule 5.1(a)(ii) PCT, the relevant background art disclosed in the documents D1 and D3 is not mentioned in the description, nor are these documents identified therein.
- 2. The description is not in conformity with the claims as required by Rule 5.1(a)(iii) PCT.

Claims

2

1

A method of automatically determining the progress 3 1. of a process using reactive species or generating 4 product species, including continuously monitoring 5 a predetermined frequency or frequency band of 6 radiation emitted from or absorbed by the species, 7 developing a graphical or numerical output 8 corresponding to the level of emittance or 9 absorption, and electronically comparing the shape 10 of that output with a predicted output or trend to 11 provide an indication of the progress of the 12 13 process.

14

15 2. A method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising 16 generating a control signal for controlling the 17 process when a predetermined stage in the process 18 progress is attained.

19

A method as claimed in any one of Claims 1 or 2, wherein the process is plasma based.

22

23 4. A method of processing a semiconductor workpiece 24 including determining the process progress as 25 claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3 and 26 controlling the process in response to the 27 indication provided.

28

A process control system for controlling a process 29 5. using reactive species or generating product 30 species, including means for continuously 31 capturing an optical frequency differentiated 32 sample of radiation from the process, a detector 33 for producing an output indicative of the time 34 varying intensity of the radiation, and shape 35 recognition means in the temporal domain for 36 comparing the output against a predicted output or 37



trend to provide an indication of progress of the process.

3

4 6. A system as claimed in claim 5, wherein the optical frequency differentiated sample of radiation is processed by a shape recognition means operating in the optical frequency domain prior to its processing in the time domain.

9

A system as claimed in claim 6, wherein the shape 10 7. 11 recognition means operating in the optical frequency domain is a specifically designed 12 'Fabry-Perot' etalon having a series of passbands 13 which are linearly separated in wavenumbers which 14 correspond to the vibrationally broadened 15 molecular series of the chemical constituent which 16 17 is characteristic of the process being monitored.

18

19 8. A system as claimed in claim 7, wherein the
20 'Fabry-Perot' etalon is scanned in centre
21 frequency by continuously tilting it about a rest
22 position.

23

9. A system as claimed in claim 6, wherein the frequency differentiated sample of radiation is derived from a monochromator means and the shape recognition means operating in the optical frequency domain is implemented in software following the detection of the signal and its conversion to an electrical signal.

31

10. A system as claimed in Claim 5, wherein the radiation capturing means includes an optical output, a thin film filter and an interference device.

36

11. A system as claimed in Claim 10, wherein the interference device is a 'Fabry-Perot' etalon.



A process control system wherein a time evolving 2 spectral output from a reaction is detected by a 3 spectral detection means and then used in 4 combination with the application of shape 5 recognition techniques to provide a continuous 6 7 measure of process progress against a predicted

8 trend.

9

A process control system as claimed in Claim 12, 10 wherein the spectral detection means includes the 11 combination of a thin film filter with an 12 13 interference means.

14

A process control system as claimed in Claim 13, 15 16 wherein the interference means is a 'Fabry-Perot' 17 etalon.

18

A process control system as claimed in Claim 13, 19 wherein the interference means is a scanned 20 21 'Fabry-Perot'.

22

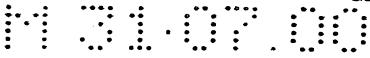
23 A process control system as claimed in any one of claims 12 to 15, including a digital filter for . 24 determining the shape of the time evolving 25 26 spectral output.

27

A process control system as claimed in any one of 28 Claim 12 to 15, wherein the shape recognition is 29 achieved by a series of masks derived from 30 31 different time epochs using a Gradiometer 32 transform.

33

34 A process control system as claimed in any one of 35 Claims 12 to 15, wherein the shape recognition is 36 achieved by a series of masks derived from 37 different time epochs using a Fourier Transform. 38



17

1 19. A process control system as claimed in any one of 2 claims 12 to 15, wherein the shape recognition is 3 achieved by a series of masks derived from 4 different time epochs using a Laplace Transform.

5

6 20. A process control system as claimed in any one of claims 12 to 15, wherein the shape recognition is achieved by a series of masks derived from different time epochs using the Kohonen self organising map.

11

12 21. A process control system as claimed in any one of claims 12 to 15, wherein the shape recognition is achieved by a series of masks derived from different time epochs using the cellular neural network paradigm.

17

22. A process control system as claimed in any one of claims 12 to 15, wherein the shape recognition is achieved by a series of masks derived from different time epochs using Polynomial Interpolated Measures.

23

24 23. A process control system as claimed in any one of claims 12 to 15, wherein the shape recognition is achieved by a series of masks derived from different time epochs using the method of Fractals.

29

30 24. A process control system as claimed in any one of 31 Claim 12 to 23, wherein the spectral detection 32 means includes a dispersive grating monochromator.

33

34 25. A process control system as claimed in any one of 35 claims 12 to 23, wherein the spectral detection 36 means includes a scanned 'Fabry-Perot' 37 interferometer.

26. A process control system as claimed in any one of
 Claims 12 to 23, wherein the spectral detection
 means includes a Fourier Transform Spectrometer.

4

5 27. A process control system as claimed in any one of 6 claims 12 to 26, wherein a multiplicity of 7 spectrum parts are examined simultaneously.

8

9 28. A process control system as claimed in any one of 10 claims 12 to 26, wherein the spectral detection 11 means detects the absorption spectrum of light of 12 a particular characteristic wavelength.

13

29. A process control system as claimed in any of
 claim 28, including a laser as a light source for
 providing the light of the particular wavelength.

17

18 30. A process control system as claimed in any of 19 claims 29, including a frequency swept laser as 20 the light source.

21

22 31. A process control system as claimed in any one of 23 Claims 12 to 26, wherein the process is plasma 24 based.



(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

Applicant's or agent's file reference FOR FURTHER see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below.						
International application No.	International filing date (day/month/year)	(Earliest) Priority Date (day/month/year)				
PCT/GB 99/02082 12/07/1999 11/07/1998						
Applicant						
VORGEM LIMITED et al.						
This International Search Report has bee according to Article 18. A copy is being tr	on prepared by this International Searching Au ansmitted to the International Bureau.	thority and is transmitted to the applicant				
This International Search Report consists X It is also accompanied by	of a total of sheets. y a copy of each prior art document cited in this	s report.				
Basis of the report						
a. With regard to the language, the language in which it was filed, un	international search was carried out on the balless otherwise indicated under this item.	asis of the international application in the				
the international search v Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).	vas carried out on the basis of a translation of	the international application furnished to this				
b. With regard to any nucleotide are was carried out on the basis of the	nd/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the in the interior in the interior in the individual in the individual in the individual in the individual individ	nternational application, the international search				
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	bsequently furnished written sequence listing as filed has been furnished.	does not go beyond the disclosure in the				
the statement that the inf furnished	ormation recorded in computer readable form	is identical to the written sequence listing has been				
2. Certain claims were fou	ınd unsearchable (See Box I).					
3. Unity of invention is lac	eking (see Box II).					
4. With regard to the title,						
X the text is approved as s	ubmitted by the applicant.					
the text has been establi	shed by this Authority to read as follows:					
5. With regard to the abstract,						
the text has been establi	ubmitted by the applicant. shed, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Autho e date of mailing of this international search re	rity as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, port, submit comments to this Authority.				
6. The figure of the drawings to be put	olished with the abstract is Figure No.	4				
X as suggested by the app	licant.	None of the figures.				
because the applicant fa	iled to suggest a figure.					
because this figure bette	r characterizes the invention.					





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According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

 $\label{eq:minimum} \begin{array}{ll} \text{Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)} \\ IPC 7 & G01N \end{array}$

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	DE 27 36 262 A (NORTHERN TELECOM LTD) 16 March 1978 (1978=03-16) page 6, paragraph 1 -page 7, paragraph 1 page 8, paragraph 3 -page 9, paragraph 1 page 9, paragraph 3 -page 10, paragraph 1 page 13, paragraph 2	1-6
Υ	figures 2,3	11,12
Y	US 5 225 888 A (SELWYN GARY S ET AL) 6 July 1993 (1993-07-06) column 3, line 60 -column 7, line 11 column 7, line 48 -column 8, line 60 figure 4	11,12
Α	1,94,5	4,5,8,9, 15,16, 26,32

X Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.	Patent family members are listed in annex.			
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art. "&" document member of the same patent family			
Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report			
27 October 1999	05/11/1999			
Name and mailing address of the ISA	Authorized officer			
European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL – 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Krametz, E			



International Application No CT/GB 99/02082

C (Continue	ation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT	
Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5 290 383 A (KOSHIMIZU CHISHIO) 1 March 1994 (1994-03-01) column 4, line 34 -column 5, line 47	1-6
A	WO 98 07002 A (BECKMANN WILLIAM GEORGE; VORGEM LIMITED (GB); HICKS SIMON ERIC (GB) 19 February 1998 (1998-02-19) cited in the application claims 4-6	18-20
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WO 9807002	A	19-02-1998	AU	3856897	Α	06-03-1998
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ATENT COOPERATION THE ATY

	From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU				
PCT	То:				
NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION (PCT Rule 61.2)	Assistant Commissioner for Patents United States Patent and Trademark Office Box PCT Washington, D.C.20231 ÉTATS-UNIS D'AMÉRIQUE				
Date of mailing (day/month/year) 04 March 2000 (04.03.00)	in its capacity as elected Office				
International application No. PCT/GB99/02082	Applicant's or agent's file reference P22105/GWO				
International filing date (day/month/year) 12 July 1999 (12.07.99)	Priority date (day/month/year) 11 July 1998 (11.07.98)				
Applicant					
HOLBROOK, Mark, Burton et al					
1. The designated Office is hereby notified of its election made: X in the demand filed with the International Preliminary Examining Authority on: 04 February 2000 (04.02.00)					

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Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35

Authorized officer

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